

Ardusa

A GRAMMAR OF THE ARDUSAN LANGUAGES

by Ian A. Cook

last edited

September 9, 2018

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Typeset in Junicode and Fira Sans with Xe_{La}TeX.

Ardusa is a fictional landmass set in a fictional constructed world. All of the languages spoken on Ardusa, such as Tavonic, Alnuric, Redodhic, and others, are themselves fictional, spoken by fictional groups of people, and as such are not related to any naturally existing languages. These languages' vocabularies are entirely *a priori*, which means that no words are derived from the vocabularies of real-world languages. That being said, these languages are intended to be naturalistic, so similarities will occur. Nonetheless, any actual duplication is accidental.



No website yet



<https://github.com/nai888/ardusa>



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Abbreviations

AN animate
IND indicative
INF infinitive
PL plural

PRF perfective
PRG progressive
PST past
TOP topic

* ungrammatical
? grammatically questionable
! semantically odd or ill-formed

Acknowledgments

Given that I have not taken any official linguistics coursework, this work would not be possible without several sources of linguistic knowledge. Mark Rosenfelder's *The Language Construction Kit* and *Advanced Language Construction Kit* were important to my first starting out in the world of language construction, with further knowledge gained from David J. Peterson's *The Art of Language Invention*. Of course, I received an unmeasurable amount of education via several online sources, especially the articles available on Wikipedia. Yet more education, as well as inspiration and motivation, have come from the *Conlangery* podcast and all its hosts and guests.

Finally, this document's format, layout, and organization have been influenced by a few sources, including:

- Thomas E. Payne, *Describing Morphosyntax: A Guide for Field Linguists* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2006), ISBN: 0 521 58805 7 paperback, <http://www.cambridge.org/vi/academic/subjects/languages-linguistics/grammar-and-syntax/describing-morphosyntax-guide-field-linguists>
- Carsten Becker, "A Grammar of Ayeri: Documenting a Fictional Language," <https://github.com/carbeck/ayerigrammar>
- Matt Pearson, "The Okuna Reference Grammar," <http://pearson.conlang.org/>

Preface

This document provides a detailed grammatical description of the languages of Ardusa, a fictional landmass set in a fictional constructed world. This project serves as a method for linguistic research, as an intellectual exercise, as an outlet for creative and artistic expression, and as a setting for potential future works of fiction. It is intended primarily for my own personal use and entertainment, though others with similar linguistic interests will hopefully find it interesting and entertaining as well. I have chosen to use \LaTeX to typeset this grammar because it provides a way to be clear, consistent, and organized. Further, since \LaTeX uses plain text files, it allows me to use Git for version control so I can keep track of changes over time.

My goal is to build a series of languages with naturalistic grammars that are linguistically plausible and consistent, yet also original in their content and details. This project consists of three distinct and unrelated language families, each of which contains one or more related languages. Some elements of these languages are influenced by existing languages such as Japanese, Finnish, Navajo, Nahuatl, and Arabic, but they are not meant to simply mimic these, instead drawing this inspiration into new forms along with entirely *a priori* lexicons. Ardusa and the Ardusan languages is an ongoing project with no fixed endpoint or goal.

This concise grammar is my attempt to document the Ardusan languages in an official and systematic way, and as comprehensively as possible. It is intended to be the official description of the languages. This is a concise grammar because, admittedly, I am not a professional linguist, nor have I taken any linguistics coursework. My education in linguistics consists solely of self-guided research, which means invariably my knowledge will be limited. It is a concise grammar because, frankly, I don't know enough to go into greater detail. That being said, I'm always eager to learn, and will always accept feedback. Again, learning is one of the reasons for this endeavor.

Since the purpose of writing this grammar is to provide a comprehensive description of the Ardusan languages, not to teach them to others, it is not intended to serve as a textbook or as a way to learn the languages. I have organized topics thematically, rather than curricularly, and I employ technical terms when they are precise, accurate, and appropriate. I have not conducted a formal analysis of the languages, but I have worked to make it as descriptive as possible.

The discussion is ordered from the smallest elements of the languages to the largest. It begins with a description of each language's place in Ardusa followed by their phonologies, it addresses morphology and the combining of words, it discusses vocabulary and derivation, and it explains syntax and discourse. The final chapter serves as a reference grammar, summarizing all of the previous chapters. There are

also several appendices describing the conceptual metaphors that organize much of the lexicons, the naming practices of the fictional speakers of these languages, several translation examples, and lexicons. Other resources include a glossary of linguistic glossing abbreviations, a bibliography, and an index.

This document uses several linguistics conventions to clarify meaning. Any reference to specific orthographic spelling is marked with angled brackets, such as ⟨hin⟩. Pronunciations are usually given phonemically, in which case they are marked with slashes, such as /hin/. Phonetic pronunciations are used only when conveying specific details like the difference between allophones, and are marked with square brackets, such as [çin]. Both phonemic and phonetic pronunciations are given using the International Phonetic Alphabet. Foreign words are always written in italics, such as *lu*. English glosses are surrounded by single quotes, such as ‘and’. If a morphological gloss is provided in-line, it is surrounded by parentheses, such as (INF).

Many short examples are provided in one single line.

- (1) Tavonic: *šek* /ʃek/ ‘ran’ (run.IND.PST.PRF)

Longer examples are usually provided with a multi-line, or interlinear, gloss. In these examples, the optional first line will indicate which language the example is in, if it is not clear from context. The next line presents the text in that language, followed by the pronunciation. After this, the text is broken into its component morphemes, and the following line provides a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss. The final line provides an English translation of the example phrase or sentence.

- (2) Tavonic

Oko nan šeđo.

/o'ko nan ʃe'ðo/

oko nan šeđo

dog PL.AN.TOP run.IND.PST.PRG

‘The dogs were running.’

As shown in example 2, morpheme glosses are labeled with abbreviations in SMALL CAPS. A full list of all glossing abbreviations is given on page vi. A hyphen marks a morpheme boundary within a word that is shared between the text and its gloss, while a period marks a boundary present in only one or the other, including when a single word in the text corresponds to multiple words in its gloss. Clitics are marked with an equals sign, reduplication with a tilde, discontinuous affixes (e.g., infixes, circumfixes) with angle brackets, and morphemes that cannot be easily separated out with backslashes.

The L^AT_EX source code for this grammar and a copy of this PDF are available in a public [GitHub](#) repository. Undoubtedly, there will be errors in this document. If you notice any, please feel free to open an issue in the GitHub repository with a description and the location of the error.

Ian A. Cook
Minneapolis, September 8, 2018

Part I

Tavonic Language Family

History and Ethnography

The Tavotath (the Tavonic people) migrated to Ardusa hundreds of years ago. Ardusa is far from any other landmasses and is isolated from the influence of other lands and other peoples. The Tavotath landed in the warm southeastern regions of Ardusa where they first established their new home, naming this new realm *Urdeso*, a compound word meaning 'Safe Land'. Over the following centuries, the Tavotath spread westward and northward throughout the whole of Ardusa.

As the Tavotath spread, they formed several individual territories, each of which eventually developed into small kingdoms. These kingdoms constantly battled one another for power, and borders were continually shifting. Those who fled the fighting fled northward, furthering the Tavonic expansion throughout Ardusa. As the Tavotath spread farther apart and splintered, their language diverged. Two main dialects emerged, one in the north and one in the south.

After several hundred years, one kingdom in the south emerged as dominant, conquering or allying with more and more kingdoms until the entire south of Ardusa was united under one empire. This empire (*alnur* in the southern dialect) enforced the usage of the language that had emerged in the south, thus forming the Alnuric language. The empire continued to push northward until it spread too thin and reached a stalemate with the allied kingdoms in the north. Finally, after a couple hundred years of relatively stable rule, the empire declined and divided again into individual territories, leaving behind six sovereign kingdoms.

While the empire was emerging in the south, the kingdoms in the north formed a loose alliance to resist its spread. The alliance (*rejib* in the northern dialect) managed to reach a stalemate with the empire, stopping its spread northward. The allied kingdoms together maintained the language that emerged in the north, thus forming the Redodhic language. Eventually, as the empire split and the northern alliance was no longer needed, the north also split into individual territories, leaving behind four sovereign kingdoms.

Phonology

What's the phonology like?

Morphological Typology

What's the morphological typology like?

Morphology

How does the morphology work?

Compounding

How does compounding work?

Time and Measurement

How to tell time and measure things.

Derivation

How do you make new words?

Syntax

How do words go together?

Discourse

How does conversation work?

Tavonic Reference Grammar

Here is a reference grammar for Tavonic.

Alnuric Reference Grammar

Here is a reference grammar for Alnuric.

Redodhic Reference Grammar

Here is a reference grammar for Redodhic.

Part II

Kalaakan Language Family

History and Ethnography

Phonology

Morphological Typology

Morphology

Compounding

Time and Measurement

Derivation

Syntax

Discourse

Kalaakan Reference Grammar

Elvish Reference Grammar

Dwarvish Reference Grammar

Orcish Reference Grammar

Part III

Kunmian Language Family

History and Ethnography

Phonology

Morphological Typology

Morphology

Compounding

Time and Measurement

Derivation

Syntax

Discourse

Kunmian Reference Grammar

Gnomish Reference Grammar

Part IV

Appendices

Conceptual Metaphors

What metaphors do the vocabulary convey?

Language is a tool. I speak *with* or *using* Tandis, rather than just speaking Tandis.

B

Kinship

C

Names

D

Examples

Vocabulary

Bibliography

Becker, Carsten. “A Grammar of Ayeri: Documenting a Fictional Language.” <https://github.com/carbeck/ayerigrammar>.

Payne, Thomas E. *Describing Morphosyntax: A Guide for Field Linguists*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2006. ISBN: 0 521 58805 7 paperback. <http://www.cambridge.org/vi/academic/subjects/languages-linguistics/grammar-and-syntax/describing-morphosyntax-guide-field-linguists>.

Pearson, Matt. “The Okuna Reference Grammar.” <http://pearson.conlang.org/>.